

REMARKS

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 16-18 are the independent claims.

Claim 19 has been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1-3 and 15-18 have been amended. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Initially, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 3-8, 11-14, and 19 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicant has respectfully maintained claims 3-8 and 11-14 in dependent form because it is believed, at least for the reasons discussed below, that their base claim patentably defines the present invention over the citations of record. However, Applicant has cancelled objected to claim 19 and amended independent claim 18 to recite the features of cancelled claim 19. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 18 is allowable over the citations of record.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR §1.83(a) as failing to show the impeller of claim 10. By separate paper filed concurrently herewith, Applicant has submitted a new drawing sheet including a new FIG. 6 showing the impeller. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated U.S. Patent No. 6,108,508 (Takeuchi et al.). Claims 9 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takeuchi et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,035,165 (Watanabe). Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. (Takeuchi et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,421 (Imamiya et al.). All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, inter alia, that a developer transfer body and a developing restricting member are disposed to form a border between an upper portion of a developing chamber and an upper portion of a developer storing chamber together with an upper portion of a partition.

Independent claims 16 and 17 recite, inter alia, that a housing includes plural chambers

separated therebetween by a boundary of a supply unit, a partition, a restricting unit, and a transfer body....

However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the asserted citations teaches or suggests at least the aforementioned features. Thus, the asserted combination of citations is likewise deficient.

Takeuchi et al. relates to an image forming apparatus using a wet type developing device and teaches an image forming apparatus that includes a drum 1 and a reservoir 31 having disposed therein a developing roller 32, an applicator roller 34, a metering blade 35 which regulates the amount of developing liquid to deposit on the application roller, a circulation pump 37, and a partition that divides the inside of the reservoir into a feed section 40a, a return section 40b, and a collection section 40c. (Takeuchi et al., Col. 9, lines 12-40 FIG. 6). The Office Action takes the position that the developing roller and the applicator roller are a developer transfer body and a developer restricting member, respectively, and that the aforementioned features of independent claims 1, 16, and 17 are met. These contentions are respectfully traversed.

Takeuchi et al. teaches that the circulation pump 37 causes the liquid 4 in the reservoir to sequentially circulate through the feed, return, and collection sections. (Takeuchi et al., Col. 9, lines 40-45; FIG. 6). Further, as shown by FIG. 6, for example, the liquid flows between the applicator roller and the top of the partition 39. The Takeuchi et al. developing roller is removed from the flow of the liquid. Thus, the Takeuchi et al. developing and applicator rollers do not "form a border" (independent claim 1). Also, absent from Takeuchi et al. is a housing which includes plural chambers separated therebetween by a boundary of a supply unit, a partition, a restricting unit, and a transfer body (independent claims 16 and 17).

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claims 1, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

Regarding the rejection of claims 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Watanabe relates to a high resolution liquid development image forming apparatus and is cited for its alleged teaching of "a porous sponge as a supply member." (Office Action, page 4). Applicant respectfully submits that Watanabe adds nothing that would remedy the aforementioned deficiencies of Takeuchi et al.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

Regarding the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Imamiya et al. relates to an image forming apparatus including a returning mechanism for returning excessive developing

liquid and is cited for its alleged teaching of an impeller. Applicant respectfully submits that Imamiya et al. adds nothing that would remedy the aforementioned deficiencies of Takeuchi et al.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: November 18, 2004

By: 
Michael E. Kondoudis
Registration No. 42,758

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501